

North Ayrshire

Caroline Amos, Head of Service (Education)

Overview of North Ayrshire's model of counselling delivery

North Ayrshire is in its 3rd academic year of providing secondary school counselling throughout the local authority. Nine school counsellors have been employed and are linked to each of the 9 secondary schools, although some counsellors work across secondaries in response to the size of school roll.

Support is also offered to young people of secondary age within ASN provision. Clear guidance on the model and structure of counselling has been developed and shared throughout the local authority. Counsellors work in line with BACP guidelines. Attainment challenge money has funded this provision until this session through a workstream that focuses on improving mental health and wellbeing.

Clear referral processes and criteria have been set out which include referrals by school staff and self-referrals. Please see attached referral form. The impact of counselling is evaluated using the YP CORE-10 and the SDQ and this information is collated at the end of each school session with clear trends being identified.

The counselling service is able to offer open-ended sessions with some young people using only a few sessions while others can access longer term support. The average number of counselling sessions is 8 per young person. Counselling sits within the Nurturing North Ayrshire framework which promotes wellbeing and positive mental health across the local authority.

Impact of counselling in North Ayrshire

From June 2017 to June 2019, the counselling service was used by 659 young people. Evaluation of impact has demonstrated a statistically significant reduction in psychological distress and improved mental health and wellbeing as measured by the YP CORE-10 following counselling. The SDQ has demonstrated a statistically significant reduction in total difficulties. There is no significant difference in prosocial skills.

The counselling service is well used by schools and there is a waiting list in most schools. Across secondary schools, the number of young people who have accessed school counselling ranges from 6% to 9% of the school population.

Counsellors are based in the school building and this has the benefit of direct accessibility and limits the impact of time out of class. Counsellors are also available to provide support and advice if emergency or risk situations arise. Counsellors can liaise directly with school staff to ensure a consistent approach, prioritised need and provide advice on any follow-up support required.

An excerpt from the data collected demonstrated:

- 93.4% of young people would recommend counselling to their friends
- 94.9% of young people felt the counsellor helped them better understand their feelings and situation
- 88% of young people reported feeling more able to cope after counselling
- 75% of young reported improved relationships with friends after counselling
- 69.6% of young reported improved relationships with family after counselling
- 53.3% of young reported improved relationships with teachers after counselling

A survey of staff demonstrated significant benefits from pastoral care teams working together with counsellors in their schools. Together they assess appropriateness of referrals, update with progress if relevant and there is support and advice from counsellors to the pastoral care staff and other members of school staff. Ad hoc support has been provided to teaching staff, support staff and office staff.

An excerpt from the staff survey data collected demonstrated:

- 71.9% of staff agreed or strongly agreed “The Counselling Service is an integral part of the school”
- 75% of staff agreed or strongly agreed “The Counselling Service is valued within school by staff”
- 85% of staff agreed or strongly agreed “The Counselling Service is valued within school by pupils”

Appointing a Team leader for the counselling service has ensured that the team is appropriately managed and supported and that delivery is consistent across the LA. It has also helped quality assurance overall and helped to ensure that counselling is delivered within BACP guidelines. The Team leader is able to offer a more flexible role of supporting wider mental health priorities such as the delivery of ASSIST and Safe Talk training.

The availability of a counselling team has also been helpful when significant issues have arisen in school communities such as bereavements and suicides. North Ayrshire has a clear Crisis Response Plan in place which details the roles of different professionals if a suicide of a young person takes place, including the potential role of the counsellor.

Challenges

- Inappropriate referrals – e.g referrals either for minor transitory issues or for highly complex issues which are more appropriate for CAMHS
- Increasing burden on counselling service as referrals and therefore waiting lists increase
- Tension between structure of education and local authority systems with traditional counselling service structures.
- Informational sharing and confidentiality – different guidelines for BACP and for local authorities. This is also a challenge for some parents of young people of secondary school age as the young person is entitled to confidentiality around their use of counselling.
- Absence of support from school and education staff during school holiday periods
- Counsellors being used as an urgent or emergency source of support during times of crisis, resulting in a burden on the service and interrupting consistency of service to young people already accessing counselling
- Counselling being perceived by some school staff as part of a strategy to manage the behaviour of some young people
- Counselling provision stops if a counsellor is absent – due to the nature of the counselling relationship it is not possible for a replacement member of staff to continue the work
- Referrals to multiple services at the same time, resulting in duplication of support.

Potential risks

- Counselling runs the risk of schools perceiving the solution lying in ‘fixing’ the child and therefore failing to tackle wider systemic issues.
- Schools may become reliant on counselling as a single source of support for young people, which can increase referrals, waiting lists and may impact a young person getting the right support from the right person or service at the right time.
- Counselling may be seen as the main way to provide psychological support in school, therefore missing the needs of some groups of young people who would find it difficult to engage with counselling.
- Potential confusion can arise with regard to information that can be shared with school

staff and parents.

- Counselling can risk being delivered out of context to other support and thus approaches are not joined up and consistent. There can be a lack of clarity about where counsellors sit within wider staged intervention processes including attendance at TAC meetings given the sensitive nature of their role.
- Staff wellbeing remains a significant concern in schools and counsellors have been able to support this to some extent through offering consultation on some individual pupil issues and also offering some counselling to staff. However, this is on an ad hoc basis mainly and anymore concerted attempts to support staff would be likely to require much greater capacity than that of the current counselling team.
- Counselling can run the risk of setting up an 'expert model' and deskilling staff and families who can be the main source of support for wellbeing for children and young people. Relationships are key within education and it is important that children and young people do not rely only on their 'counsellor' for support as opposed to staff, family and friends with whom they are likely to spend more of their time.
- A significant risk for North Ayrshire lies in how we restructure the Counselling service to ensure delivery to 10-and-11-year olds. Geographically this is more difficult to deliver as counsellors cannot travel round all primary schools. There are also developmental risks in that younger pupils may not always value the traditional 'talking therapy' that has been offered by NA counselling service. This will therefore require a more creative solution to how counselling might be offered in the future. Possible plans to do this are currently being drawn up and include the possibility of more group work, support and consultation for staff, etc.

North Ayrshire Guidelines for the Delivery of Secondary Counselling rev. August 2018

These guidelines are based on those of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), and cover all the areas that are essential to a high quality counselling service in secondary schools.

Primarily, these guidelines apply to Scottish Attainment Challenge funded counselling commissioned by Education and Youth Employment. As the use of pupil equity money by schools develops, these guidelines may also be useful to schools directly commissioning counselling services via this route.

1. Introduction
2. Additional roles of the counsellor
3. Clinical supervision
4. Suitable accommodation
5. Referral Procedures
6. Child or young person's criteria for accessing counselling
7. School responsibilities
8. Role of School Contact
9. Responsibilities of the counsellor
10. Quality Assurance
11. Research Framework and Guidelines
12. Parental/ Carer Involvement
13. Enhanced Criminal Background checks for counsellors
14. Insurance
15. Confidentiality policy
16. Child Protection procedures
17. Complaints procedure
18. Record Keeping

Appendix 1 – Job description and person specification

Appendix 2 – Guidelines for Child Protection / Safeguarding

Appendix 3 – Exemplar Information Leaflets

Appendix 4 – Waiting for Counselling (suggestions for staff)

Appendix 5 -- Referral and inclusion criteria for counselling young people

Appendix 6 – List of Counselling service policies, forms and guidance

Appendix 7 – References

1 Introduction

1.1 What is counselling? For the purpose of these guidelines it is important to define what is meant by counselling. In these guidelines, counselling also refers to art, music, play, and drama therapies. It is also necessary to distinguish between formal counselling, and the use of counselling skills.

1.2 Formal counselling is the area of the professional counsellor, acting in their specialist role, and in accordance with a strict code of ethics, which requires confidentiality, accountability and clinical supervision.

1.3 Counselling skills can be applied to a range of other professionals who provide advice, career interviews or a listening ear, where the role and responsibilities of the professional will determine the boundaries of their working practice.

These guidelines focus on the provision of formal counselling and follow the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) definition of counselling which is:

‘Counselling takes place when a counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may have experienced or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose.’ It is always at the request of the client as no one can properly be ‘sent’ for counselling.

By listening attentively and patiently, the counsellor can begin to perceive the difficulties from the client’s point of view and can help them to see things more clearly, possibly from a different perspective. Counselling is a way of enabling choice or change or of reducing confusion. It does not involve giving advice or directing a client to take a particular course of action. Counsellors do not judge or exploit their clients in any way.

In the counselling sessions the client can explore various aspects of their life and talk about their feelings openly in a way that is rarely possible with friends or family. Bottled up feelings such as anger, anxiety, grief and embarrassment can become very intense and counselling offers an opportunity to explore them, with the possibility of making them easier to understand. The counsellor will encourage the expression of feelings and as a result of their training will be able to accept and reflect the client’s problems without becoming burdened by them.

Acceptance and respect for the client are essential for a counsellor and as the relationship develops so too does the trust between the counsellor and client. This enables the client to look at many aspects of their life, their relationships and themselves which they may not have considered or been able to face before. The counsellor may help the client to examine in detail the behaviour or situations that are proving troublesome and to find an area where it would be possible to initiate some change as a start. The counsellor may help the client to look at the options open to them and help them to decide the best for them.

A recent report on counselling noted the following:

“School based counselling is likely to be most effective where it is delivered as part of a whole school commitment to improving mental health and wellbeing. Emotional health is everyone’s business and schools will want to consider the following areas of school practice and how they can work together to best support pupils”

In North Ayrshire, the provision of counselling is seen as part of the “Nurturing North Ayrshire” approach that aims to ensure schools support the wellbeing of young people through a range of nurturing approaches, and are safe, inclusive and nurturing environments for young people. North Ayrshire embraces the model of whole school approaches to support wellbeing. Counselling supports the emotional health of the pupil that underpins academic achievement and facilitates the building and management of helpful relationships in the school environment.

2 Additional Role of the Secondary Counsellor in North Ayrshire

Some examples of the functions that the counsellor has in addition to their counselling activities are listed below:

- Liaising with staff and parents
- Providing information on the counselling service, and advising staff and parents about confidentiality policies
- Maintaining appropriate records and case notes, and retain them in a secure place
- Attending regular supervision with a suitably qualified supervisor
- Contributing to capacity building approaches, to ensure that staff and the school community are able to meet the needs of young people in the most effective way possible
- Supporting staff self-care
- Liaising and working with other professionals, as appropriate, to support the wellbeing of young people
- Linking with the school link and Senior Manager to highlight patterns of referrals and issues that may need a change of policy and practice, as per the recommendation of the *Counselling in Schools, A Blueprint for the Future* report (2016):

“to highlight when they are supporting a number of children and young people with issues which are related to the school environment, such as bullying, academic pressure, or the handling by teachers of difficult issues such as gender identify. This can help schools identify where a change in policy or practice may be needed. Counsellors must seek permission from children and young people, or their parents/carers where appropriate, to share information that would identify any children and young people who are using the counselling service.”

Counsellor minimum qualifications

The Counselling in Schools Service has a minimum entry level for counsellors working in schools.

Appendix 1 outlines the job description and person specification used by the service.

3 Clinical supervision

3.1 Clinical supervision is the overseeing of the client's work; it protects the client and supports the counsellor.

3.2 All qualified professional counsellors are required to have clinical supervision. The minimum requirement, as laid out by BACP guidelines, is one and a half hours per month dependant on workload and counsellor experience.

3.3 It is unethical for any counsellor to work without receiving regular supervision with a qualified supervisor.

3.4 Counsellor supervision is usually referred to as external consultative supervision, and maybe on an individual or group basis.

3.5 Schools/ Education and Youth Employment will obtain contact details of the counsellors' supervisor and request annual reports. The service will review the arrangements for supervision on an ongoing basis.

3.6 Clinical supervision is regarded as one method of monitoring and evaluating the counsellors' effectiveness.

4 Suitable accommodation

4.1 It is important that the pupils feel safe and secure when working with the counsellor.

4.2 It is essential that the school is able to set aside a dedicated room for the counsellor to work in. This should ideally be in a quiet part of the school.

4.3 Staff and pupils should be made aware that when the counsellor is seeing clients the room is private and there are no interruptions.

4.4 The door should be clearly marked so that it is obvious when the counsellor is working.

4.5 It is equally important that the counsellor is safe. The school should ensure that the counselling room is not too isolated and members of staff are aware when counselling is taking place.

5 Referral Procedures

Education and Youth Employment will ensure a clear referral route that offers a common level of service across secondary schools in North Ayrshire.

There are several methods of referral including:

- Person with overall responsibility for ASN/ Wellbeing will co-ordinate referrals
- Parents or carers referral request, **which will be assessed by DHT with responsibility for ASN /Wellbeing to consider other services involved and young person preferences**
- **Self-referral**
- **Other professional**

Clear consent must be obtained and recorded from the young person, irrespective of the referral route. Each school would provide a young person with information about the counselling service and work with the counsellor to ensure written consent is gained.

It is important that the service should be seen as non-stigmatising by the school community and a normal part of school provision, which is integrated into the school community.

For the young person to be eligible to receive counselling, s/he must understand the nature of counselling and be able to make a valid verbal counselling contract, including the ability to understand the principle of confidentiality and the need for this to be overridden where the young person is alleged to be at risk of harm from self or other.

Routine requests will be entered into the appointment system and be seen at the earliest opportunity. Urgent cases will be seen at the next available cancellation, free appointment or, in exceptional circumstances, on the counsellor's next working day, subject to negotiation with the counsellor and link person. **This is not an alternative to consultation about risk with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).**

It may be necessary for the young person or the referrer to indicate on the referral form their perceptions of the urgency of the situation or the level of risk. It is useful to use a rating form (e.g. CORE-YP on the referral form). It is essential that the counsellor is informed if the young person has been seen in the past/is currently working with any other agencies such

as CAMHS, Social Work, Educational Psychology, Extended Outreach / other and the current level of involvement.

It is the responsibility of the referrer or link person to indicate to the counsellor, for example, if the young person is a Looked-after Child or is on the Child Protection Register. It is also the responsibility to inform the counsellor if the young person poses any risk.

Young people who are currently receiving support from other agencies are eligible to access the Counselling Service. There should be no apparent conflict with any impending legal proceedings or overload in the support or interventions being given to the young person elsewhere.

Counsellors need to be mindful of the fact that there may be occasions where information that is disclosed in the course of a counselling session may later form part of legal proceedings or legal action and that they may be required to give evidence or provide reports in due course concerning their client. (*Good Practice Guidance for counselling in schools*, 4th edition BACP, p 27).

In these situations, counsellors should seek guidance from the Work stream Lead in North Ayrshire. There may be some instances where it may not be appropriate for a pupil to be offered counselling for example, they may not be ready to engage in the process. If there is any doubt concerning the appropriateness of a young person receiving counselling, then a discussion will be held to clarify the issues involved and establish the best way forward.

It is important that young people see counselling as a service for them. Therefore when setting up the procedures, comments from young people should be included at all stages of the counselling process.

A post box system, texting, telephone, drop-in, pre-printed cards with pictorial representation or other systems may be used as agreed by the school community. User friendly information will be displayed and distributed as agreed, to inform the school community of the service.

For more detail, the counsellors have created 'Referral and inclusion criteria for counselling young people' (Appendix 5).

6 Child or young person's criteria for accessing counselling services

There are a range of reasons why children and young people may benefit from access to the counselling service. The child or young person:

- 6.1 may be experiencing emotional distress which has persisted over time
- 6.2 may have experienced a traumatic event or crisis with recognised traumatic consequences
- 6.3 must be willing to engage in counselling on a voluntary basis
- 6.4 must not be engaged in counselling or therapy with any other agency at the time
- 6.5 in negotiation with the counsellor, will develop a counselling contract

Consideration needs to be given to the management of how the young person is given information, spoken to about counselling and excused from lessons in order to attend and discreetly access counselling sessions.

Please give consideration to the following issues when referring a pupil for counselling:

1. What are your reasons for the referral?
2. Is there any other information regarding family background, hospitalisation or other agencies' involvement, which may be helpful?
3. How is this pupil functioning in school? (Academically, socially, behaviourally)
4. How do you expect counselling to help this pupil?
5. Has the pupil been fully consulted about his/her referral and given the information about counselling?
6. Has the young person been consulted about whether or not their parents will be informed about the counselling?

Some common indicators for referral to counselling can include:

- Standard of work dropping dramatically
- Becoming subdued or over excited
- Sudden changes, marked mood swings and/or behaviour that appears out of character and/or extreme
- School refusal
- Those who bully others and those who have experienced bullying behaviour
- Are known or who are suspected to have been sexually, physically or emotionally abused
- Have difficulties due to family breakdown
- Peer group difficulties/relationships
- Have been bereaved or suffered loss or separation
- Low self esteem
- Self harm e.g. cutting
- Misuse of alcohol and drugs.

If a member of schools' staff is unsure whether to refer for counselling it may be helpful to discuss concerns with the counsellor in order to clarify the most appropriate way forward.

Once a member of school staff is clear that a referral is appropriate, then they need to contact a member of staff who has the responsibility for making contact with the counselling service. There is a need for discretion and confidentiality to be observed as much as possible and respect for the young person's right to privacy. Teacher to teacher discussion should only take place on a need to know basis.

The signposting and referral to counselling should be done sensitively with the pupil. This can be done, either by the member of staff with counselling responsibility, or by someone else who the pupil knows and trusts.

It is essential that counselling sessions are seen as voluntary and confidential and it is a means of support not a disciplinary measure for a pupil. It should be made clear that it is an opportunity to talk about problems and worries with a view to resolving or managing them more easily. The first session is an opportunity for counsellor and client to make a decision as to whether to engage in counselling or not.

For more information, the counsellors have created 'Referral and inclusion criteria for counselling young people' (Appendix 5).

7 School Responsibilities

The school will need to consider many issues when getting ready to host a counselling service.

7.1 Ensure adequate accommodation and time and arrangements for secure record keeping- a secure storage space in an adult supervised area.

7.2 To provide a school link person (DHT) to ensure the effective running of the school counselling service at each site.

7.3 A liaison person may be appointed where required to ensure all lesson notes are available to the child or young person when lesson time is missed.

7.4 To provide support for teachers who may have to deal with immediate after effects of a counselling session, or provide respite space and time for the child.

7.5 To ensure young people engage with counselling in a voluntary way.

7.6 To provide the counsellor with access to a confidential phone and desk space.

7.7 To inform carers that young people are engaged with counselling and request that data may be used to monitor impact of the project, *where the young person has indicated that they are in agreement to this.*

7.8 To have a request for service system that is accessible for young people.

7.9 To inform the counsellor of any significant events relevant to a young person.

7.10 To raise awareness of the service with all relevant stakeholders.

8 Role of school contact

8.1 It is important for the school to nominate a member of staff who will be responsible for overseeing the work of the counsellor.

8.2 This person will need to be available for the counsellor to discuss workload and at times the appropriateness of referrals.

8.3 The school link will liaise with the secondary counselling work stream lead to ensure effective provision of the counselling service.

8.4 The school contact should inform the pupil of the confirmed appointment time and should also inform teacher of any lesson that the pupil will miss. The method of scheduling and confirming appointments will vary across schools and may include ringing classes to have pupils extracted, sending confidential notes via registration class or runners, asking guidance staff to pass on a message, and so on.

8.5 It is important that pupil confidentiality is considered in this process.

9 Responsibilities of Counsellors

9.1 It is expected that each counsellor will link with the work-stream lead, team leader, when appointed, and school based links to create a service level agreement and timetable.

9.2 Overall, this must ensure the most effective delivery of a counselling service to young people with wellbeing needs in the schools where the counsellor works.

9.3 Where a counsellor is working across more than one context, the timetable must be agreed with each school link.

9.4 Time is expected to be built in for preparation, record keeping, supervision, and liaison with other members of the counselling team. Fortnightly liaison with other team members should be ensured. Liaison time is needed for linking formally with school based link and work-stream lead.

9.5 Each counsellor will work within the context of North Ayrshire policies around confidentiality, general data protection regulation and child protection.

9.6 The counsellors will be expected to be directly involved in developing the service and providing innovative solutions to a wider range of clients including teaching staff, parents and groups of young people, as appropriate.

9.7 To link with the school child protection co-ordinator as appropriate in line with North Ayrshire policy.

9.8 Encourage the engagement of the young person's family when appropriate and beneficial.

9.9 Maintain accurate records and write reports as appropriate.

9.10 Practise counselling in accordance with the *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions*, published 2018 by BACP.

9.11 It is recommended that counsellors spend no more than 20 hours per week in face to face counselling with clients.

9.12 Arrangements can be made for contact to be made over the holidays, when this is felt to be feasible and in the best interests of the child.

10 Quality Assurance

Ongoing quality assurance will be essential to the implementation of the counselling service.

Measures will include:

- Annual supervision report
- Young person's feedback
- School link view
- Review of service agreement/ service delivery

- Analysis of research data, etc.

11 Research Framework and guidelines

It is essential that robust evidence is collected to monitor the impact of the secondary counselling service. This framework includes:

- Number of sessions delivered
- Pre and post measures of impact
- Pupil views of counselling input
- School qualitative observations of progress
- Attainment and attendance data

Referral procedure

All school counsellors should have a secure box placed somewhere in the school that can be used to post referrals. The self-referral forms can be provided next to the referral box so they are easily accessible to students.

There are three ways that pupils can be referred for counselling:

- 1) Referral from Pastoral staff, overseen by DHT
- 2) Self-referral
- 3) **Suggestion of referral by another agency, or parent, discussed between counsellor and DHT**

Referral forms must be provided along with the **Young Persons' CORE Outcome Measure (CORE-YP)**. Pastoral staff do not have to spend time with the pupil whilst they fill out the CORE-YP assessment—these can be handed to pupils and they can post the completed forms in the referral box before their first appointment with the counsellor.

It is essential that the CORE-YP is provided for each young person **prior to** any counselling sessions. It is, therefore, the counsellor's responsibility to ensure this has been received. If the young person has not filled out the questionnaire, this must be completed by the young person at the first appointment.

First appointment

Students should understand and sign the **Confidentiality Statement**.

We should already have the **CORE-YP** for each pupil at the first appointment. If it has not been handed in, please make sure you ask the student to complete it. The **Assessment form** should also be completed either at, or directly after, this appointment. The final piece of documentation we require from this appointment is the **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)** which should take only a couple of minutes.

These three pieces of information will form part of our Baseline (pre-) record for the evaluation of the counselling service.

After each session

After each counselling session, you can track the progress of each student as you wish (see section 18 on Record keeping). Please ensure you keep a brief register of attendance for each pupil. On the 3rd session, and every 3 sessions thereafter (session 6, session 9, etc.), we require the student to fill out the **CORE-YP** assessment again. This is so that we have some

sort of 'endpoint' data for those who may withdraw from the service or dropout before their counselling sessions have finished.

End of Counselling Evaluation

When it is agreed to stop the counselling sessions, we need to collect our 'Post' measures.

On the final appointment, please ensure you issue the young person with:

- 1) The **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire** (POST version)
- 2) The **CORE-YP** Questionnaire
- 3) **Post-Counselling Questionnaire**

There will also be an online survey issued to Senior Management Teams and Pastoral Staff at the end of the school year to evaluate the impact of the Counselling Service as an overall addition to the school. **A further robust measure of pre and post-test social and emotional functioning will be introduced for all pastoral care/DHT referrals for 2018-2019.**

Drop-in sessions

Counsellors may offer drop-in sessions but these are NOT full sessions and should only be to answer queries, allow students to become familiar with the counsellor or to arrange appointments. All drop-ins should be recorded on the **Drop-in record sheet**. This is so that we can track what questions are asked, what concerns are raised and to be able to see whether the drop-in sessions then lead to students using our counselling service. **The drop in model is favoured over any system when children and young people, not known to the service, are seen on an ad hoc basis.**

Withdrawing from the service

If a student has been attending counselling sessions and then decides to withdraw or simply does not show up, this can be treated on a pupil by pupil basis. Sometimes the Pastoral Teacher may be aware of this and can discuss the situation with the student but, on other occasions it may be unethical to approach the young person as it is their own choice as to whether or not they attend. Information about why a student has decided they do not want to attend anymore would be worthwhile to the authority.

Sharing of data between Counsellors and the authority

There is a research timeline of what has to be collected from the young people and when. Please try to follow this as best you can as this will mean the data collected across the authority is consistent and robust. The checklist/cover page provided should be used to pass the research information back to the authority when the counselling sessions have finished. Not only will we be evaluating our counselling service for the purpose of reporting to the Scottish Government, but we will also be able to modify and improve the service provided based on this data.

It is proposed that all 'initial and before' data (please refer to the research checklist) should be shared with the authority on a monthly basis. This can be passed to direct to the psychological assistant. Please ensure all documentation provided to the authority has the cover page attached as this will help to respect the privacy and rights of the young person in line with the General Data Protection Regulation.

If you have any questions relating to the research framework proposed, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Claire MacKenzie at cmackenzieeye@north-ayrshire.gov.uk or on 01294 324 527.

12 Parental/carer agreement

While it is acknowledged that working in partnership with parents/carer can benefit the counselling relationship, there is the need to a clearly stated policy of a commitment to protecting counselling confidentiality, which sets definitive limits to parental involvement, decisively underpinned by both ethical and legal factors.

Scots law on capacity is governed by the Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991, which specifically gives children who have sufficient understanding the right to make medical decisions involving specific medical professionals, and enter into “transactions”, effectively meaning obtaining services. School counselling, not being based in the medical world, is, however, covered by the legal guidance about “transactions”. Children have the right to enter into counselling with a counsellor if they have capacity to make this decision. Where children have this capacity, there is no need to obtain the consent of a person with parental responsibilities and parental rights. (*Counselling Children and Young People in School Contexts in Scotland, Legal Resource for the counselling professions*, BACP 2016).

Refer to the Assessing Competence Form for completion only when Capacity is in doubt.

In secondary schools it is the school's responsibility to notify parents or carers that counselling is available in the school. There is no legal requirement for the young person's parents to be informed that they have an appointment with the school counsellor. However, BACP guidelines suggest that before the age of 13, it is unlikely that children will be of sufficient understanding and intelligence and therefore advises that parents should be informed in these cases.

Care needs to be exercised when a young person is refusing counselling, but is required to by adults.

To provide a balance between assessing the needs of the young person and the concerns of the parents:

- The counsellor or staff will seek the young person's permission (age 11-15). Where permission is freely given, a telephone call will be made to the parent/carer
- Where a young person is unwilling to allow their parents to be informed, the student will attend the first counselling session to establish issue and capacity before commencing the counselling sessions
- If the case arises in age group 11-13, then the DHT link should be consulted and will take responsibility over this potentially difficult decision

13 Enhanced criminal background checks for counsellors

13.1 As school counsellors are working with vulnerable children and young people they will be in possession of an enhanced PVG.

14 Insurance

14.1 Counsellors are expected to have liability insurance, as noted in BACP guidance.

15 Confidentiality policy

15.1 Counsellors, children, young people and schools must have a clear understanding of the issues around information sharing and confidentiality. Confidentiality is a basic ethical principal in the counselling process and should be respected at all times, however there are specific circumstances under which counsellors may need to break confidentiality and share information without consent.

15.2 At the beginning of the counselling relationship, the young person and counsellor will enter into a counselling contract/agreement that spells out the guidelines about confidentiality in a way most appropriate to the young person's age and understanding.

15.3 At all times the welfare of the young person will take precedence over confidentiality and it is important to make young people aware of this exception.

15.4 At the heart of the service is the one to one therapeutic counselling provided for pupils which includes liaison and consultation with staff. Please note that the young person should not be questioned about the sessions they have attended. Young people may not want their peer group to know (for many different reasons) that they see the school counsellor.

16 Child protection procedures

All counsellors working in schools must be familiar with and follow North Ayrshire procedures for Child Protection and Safeguarding. The Education and Youth Employment policy states:

All Education & Youth Employment staff and those working in establishments and/or with children and young people must be:

- Aware of arrangements for protecting children
- Alert to children's needs
- Clear about their own role in ensuring the safety of all children

Counsellors will be aware of the exceptional circumstances where confidentiality may be breached and direct action taken to protect and ensure the safety of the young person.

Counsellors should regularly attend training on child protection issues, be aware of who their child protection designated senior person is in school and have a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities in relation to raising child protection concerns in respect of their clients.

For further information, see Appendix 2, Guidelines for Child Protection / Safeguarding

17 Complaints procedure

17.1 Counsellors in North Ayrshire are guided by the North Ayrshire values of Focus, Passion and Inspiration, but also by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions*, 2018.

17.2 The counselling service is covered by the North Ayrshire council complaints procedure.

18 Record Keeping

This policy supplements the Council's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which counsellors should familiarise themselves with.

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* commits members to work, and be accountable to professional standards stating: 'we will keep accurate records that are appropriate to the service being provided.'

Consent to make and keep records

- The School counsellor is responsible for obtaining consent from the pupil for making, keeping and storing a record of the counselling activity and related correspondence.
- Ideally this should be included in the counselling contract or agreement with the pupil and documented that the consent has been given.
- Where consent has not been given, the counsellor should explore with the pupil the reason it has been withheld and seek guidance from the line manager or supervisor about whether counselling may continue.
- Where a pupil does not have capacity to consent to counselling and consent has been given by the parent, carer or legal guardian, then the parent, carer or legal guardian must also consent to the record keeping.

What is a record?

Session notes summarise what the pupil said, how they presented themselves, and direct observations made by the counsellor. It typically also includes the counsellor's intervention or strategy with a rationale. It will also include attendance or non-attendance and session number.

Other items kept in the file may include:

- referral forms
- assessments including risk assessments
- outcome measures
- safety plans
- written and signed consents
- copies of correspondence from the pupil or relating to work with the pupil
- copies of correspondence, or notes about consultation with anyone else about the pupil (e.g. possible referral, or discussion by the counsellor with the referrer, Pastoral Support, a peer group or supervisor)
- copies of any handouts or information sheets given to pupils together with any notes about how the client acted on these
- artwork, drawings or other material produced, brought or utilised during a session (unless the pupil took these away in which case it should be noted in their session record)

Who can access the record and why?

Due to the personal and sensitive nature of the pupil's record, only the counsellor has automatic and full access to the counselling record as the counsellor is responsible for the work contained therein.

- Pupils need to be told the circumstances in which the counsellor may wish to breach confidentiality and the pupil should have the opportunity to discuss and negotiate this with the counsellor at the outset of their work together
- Others may access select parts of the counselling record with the appropriate consent from the pupil wherever possible or by an appropriate legal request (Court, police, etc.). The pupil should be involved in any such release of information wherever possible.
- Counselling records are kept on a 'need-to-know' basis with only those who need to know what is in the data, know it at the time they need to know it, and nothing more.
- Pupils have the right to look at their counselling record if they request keeping in mind limits imposed by possible child protection investigations. Other potential pupil welfare issues may need to be thought about and addressed with a supervisor first.
- The counsellor may wish to make a referral of the pupil to another agency or organisation. The sharing of records should only be done with the pupil's consent.
- Where the pupil has consented, the counselling service manager or designee may use data from the counselling record for statistical and funding reports that are anonymised and do not identify the pupil. The pupil will have consented to this during the assessment process. Records where consent has been withheld for research purposes will not be included in the research.
- Parents, carers and legal guardians do not have the right to access a pupil's counselling record without the pupil's consent. However, where the pupil lacks capacity to consent to counselling and the parent, carer or guardian has given their consent for the counselling and the keeping of the record, then they generally have the right to view the records as requested. This may be denied where there is a need to safeguard the wellbeing or safety of the child or others, or to safeguard a police or other investigation in the context of child protection.
- The Pupil's Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003 reg.10(3)(a) allows a child to request that information be withheld from a specified person or persons where there is a risk of significant harm or distress to the pupil or another person. For further information, refer to BACP's Good Practice in Action 026, Legal Resources for the counselling professions, Counselling Children and Young People in School Contexts in Scotland.
- For a more detailed understanding about individual confidentiality and record keeping issues, the counsellor should speak with their Manager, Supervisor, or refer to the relevant BACP Good Practice Guidelines.

Practical matters on record keeping and sharing of information

Paper Records

1. File Creation
 - Open a new file for each client.
 - Use a standard approach to file names, e.g. Client Surname, First name(s), Date of Birth.
 - Ensure each file and all papers are marked with appropriate classification (i.e. OFFICIAL PROTECT, OFFICIAL, PUBLIC)
 - Add papers to a file in the order in which they were written and place in reverse book order, so the latest document is on top.
 - Ensure papers are attached to the file (e.g. using tags, rings, or other device), avoid leaving papers loose within a file as they can easily be lost or become detached from the file.
2. Storage
 - All files containing personal data must be kept in secure storage (e.g. lockable filing cabinets) not personal storage (e.g. pedestal drawers).
 - Access to the files and secure storage should be limited to those with authority to create, manage or view the files.
 - Ensure secure storage is locked whenever office(s) are left unattended.
3. Handling
 - If transporting files or papers between offices and/or buildings, ensure any sensitive or personal data is appropriately protected.
 - For example, use a lockable briefcase or other lockable bag, seal files or papers within envelopes (marked with appropriate classification) if a lockable bag is not available.
 - If transporting files or papers between schools by car, in addition to the steps above, ensure that files are not left on seats, visible through windows, etc.
4. Retention

Pupil counselling records will be retained until the date of last action or when the pupil reaches 25 years (whichever is later). They will be securely destroyed in accordance with North Ayrshire Council policy.

Electronic Documents and Records

At this time, the only pupil information that may be routinely stored on the School's computer system are the days and times of appointments. Personal and sensitive pupil information from counselling will not be stored there.

Emails

When sending emails that include personal data, ensure you follow these steps:

- Only include relevant information, do not include additional personal data if it is not required.
- Ensure you have selected the appropriate classification, OFFICIAL PROTECT if the email content or attachment(s) contain personal data.
- Check that you have selected the correct recipients/emails.
- As the School's email system GLOW is not secure, avoid sending personal or sensitive information about pupils via GLOW. School administrators and pastoral support teachers have corporate email accounts.

Appendix 1

Job Description and Person Specification

Role Profile

Post Title:	School Counsellor
Grade:	8

ROLE DEFINITION

To provide a counselling service to the pupils and staff of the school

KEY TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES Corporate

Responsibilities

- To undertake individual role in line with the Council's Strategic Priorities and in compliance with the Council's corporate policies and procedures.
- To undertake any other reasonably required duties as instructed by Management or someone acting on their behalf, in addition to the role specific tasks & responsibilities detailed below.

Role Specific Tasks & Responsibilities

- To offer pupils and staff in one of our 9 secondary schools, individual counselling to support their emotional wellbeing and ensure positive mental health
- To work with a diverse range of issues including bereavement and loss, anxiety and fears, low mood, lack of confidence etc.
- To liaise with the pastoral care team and other staff members whose role it is to support young people.
- To work with other professionals, where appropriate, relating to wellbeing interventions.
- To network with personnel from other agencies with a view to easing referrals and accessing specialist consultants
- To keep suitable case records on the counselling in a secure place
- To attend regular supervision with a suitably qualified supervisor
- Attend and participate in relevant meetings as required.
- Participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required.
- Working in consultation with the authority's child protection policies

- To provide information on the counselling service, the role of the counsellor and the boundaries of confidentiality to pupils, staff and parents
- To report back on a regular basis on numbers using the service and give a general overview of the types of problems with which the users of the service are presenting
- To perform duties within the codes of practice and ethics recommended by the BACP, UKCP or equivalent organisation
- To review and evaluate their own service delivery in line with the authority's expectations.
- To follow protocols re contacting parents / carers, data sharing and security.
- Promote and protect the emotional wellbeing of children and young people for whom you are responsible, and with whom you come into contact. Contribute to the overall ethos/work/aims of the school.
- Ability to support the role of other professionals
- Role Profile
- This Role Profile outlines the duties for the time being for this post to indicate the level of commitment and responsibilities expected. It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list and duties may be varied from time to time, which does not change the general character of the job or the level of responsibility

ESSENTIAL / DESIRABLE CRITERIA

	Essential	Desirable	Evidence
Education and Qualifications	<p>BACP Accreditation or equivalent</p> <p>Working knowledge of GIRFEC and the wellbeing indicators</p>	<p>Further therapeutic training or qualification in working with children and young people</p> <p>Post-graduate Certificate/Diploma in Counselling or equivalent</p>	<p>Application Form</p> <p>Interview</p>

<p>Experience</p>	<p>Experience of 1/1 support in a therapeutic relationship</p> <p>Minimum of 1 years' experience of working with children and young people</p> <p>Experience of facilitating groups</p>	<p>Experience of working as part of a multi-disciplinary team</p>	<p>Application Form</p> <p>References</p> <p>Interview</p>
<p>Specialist Knowledge</p>	<p>Working knowledge of GIRFEC and the wellbeing indicators</p> <p>An understanding of the developmental, emotional, social and educational issues of children and young people</p> <p>Be aware of and comply with policies and procedures relating to child protection, health, safety and security, confidentiality and data protection, reporting all concerns to an appropriate person.</p>	<p>An awareness of range of needs of people from diverse ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds</p> <p>Knowledge of local mental health services and CAMHS</p>	<p>Application Form</p> <p>Interview</p> <p>Pre/Post-Interview Check (if appropriate)</p>
<p>Skills and Abilities</p>	<p>Good communication skills</p> <p>Ability to be flexible in your working practice</p> <p>To be able to develop positive working relationships with pupils and colleagues</p> <p>Ability to work as a member of a team</p>	<p>Ability to fit into the ethos of the school and the nurturing approaches of North Ayrshire</p>	<p>Application Form</p> <p>References</p> <p>Interview</p>

	<p>Ability to take a systematic approach to work</p> <p>Ability to ensure equal opportunities for all.</p> <p>Good written and verbal communication skills</p> <p>Ability to work independently, manage own caseload and use initiative</p> <p>Ability to work with change</p> <p>Patience, tolerance and sensitivity</p> <p>A mature and non-judgmental outlook</p> <p>Ability to work to deadlines</p>		
Other	Commitment to ongoing professional development	Flexibility to work with a developing organisation.	Application Form Interview Pre/Post-Interview Check (if appropriate)

OUR STAFF VALUES & BEHAVIOURS

Value	Behaviours
<p style="text-align: center;">Focus.</p> <p><i>we</i> put our customers first <i>we</i> understand the bigger picture</p>	Provide excellent customer services.
	Meet and where possible exceed the expectations of internal and external customers.
	Understand the performance levels and standards required within our own role and strive to achieve and where possible exceed these.
	Know how the work we do fits into the overall performance of the Council.
<p style="text-align: center;">Passion.</p> <p><i>we</i> take pride in the jobs we do <i>we</i> are ambitious for our community</p>	Take ownership of our own actions and performance.
	Reflect on the work we do and consider how it could be improved.
	Have a positive impact on the lives of our customers and their communities.
	Push the boundaries to help our customers and communities realise their potential.
<p style="text-align: center;">Inspiration.</p> <p><i>we</i> all look for better ways to deliver our services <i>we</i> achieve the best results by working together</p>	Find new ways to deliver improvements, efficiencies and value for money.
	Embrace change with enthusiasm and creative ideas.
	Work together and creatively produce the best outcomes for our customers and communities.
	Plan all activities with the end goal in mind.

(School name and crest)

WHAT IS CHILD PROTECTION?

“**Child Protection**” means protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a **likelihood** or **risk** of significant harm from abuse or neglect.
(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014)

Guidelines for Child Protection/ Safeguarding

Session 2017/2018

Child Protection is Everyone's Responsibility

All Education & Youth Employment staff and those working in establishments and/or with children and young people must be:

- Aware of arrangements for protecting children
- Alert to children's needs
- Clear about their own role in ensuring the safety of all children

Our responsibility goes beyond the narrow definition of Child Protection

We have a responsibility to:

- Provide education to children and young people to help them to protect themselves
- Ensure all staff play a part in the prevention of child abuse and neglect via the curriculum by:
 - Raising pupil awareness of risks;
 - Developing skills which will help them to keep themselves safe;
 - Helping them recognise behaviours in others which may place them at risk; and
 - Teaching them how to respond in order to keep themselves safe.

Different Forms of Abuse or Neglect

The following definitions show some of the different ways in which a child can be abused but are not exhaustive as individual circumstances of abuse will vary from child to child:

- **Physical Abuse** – being hit, kicked or punched
- **Sexual Abuse** – inappropriate sexual behaviour or language by an adult towards a child
- **Emotional Abuse** – constantly criticised, ignored, humiliated
- **Neglect** – persistent failure to meet a child's basic or psychological needs: not being properly fed, clothed or cared for or poor hygiene.

Additional areas of concern which you should ensure you are aware of and know the signs to look for:

- Exposure to Domestic Abuse
- Children displaying sexually harmful or problematic behaviours
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Honour based violence or forced marriages
- Child Trafficking
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Radicalisation

All Staff Should Be Alert to:

- Unexplained but significant changes to patterns of attendance, attainment or behaviours
- Something the child or young person says, discloses or chooses to confide. Children and young people often take time to seek out and test adults to whom they wish to disclose abuse/neglect
- Concern raised by other children
- Children and young people living with domestic abuse are at increased risk of significant harm both as a result of witnessing abuse and being abused themselves

Staff with Concerns:

Where there is concern about child abuse, neglect or exploitation the staff member should:

Discuss his/her concerns with the Child Protection Co-ordinator (**for your school**) **immediately**. The Child Protection Co-ordinator will decide on an appropriate course of action.

- Establish with the C.P. Co-ordinator when and how concerns should be recorded/shared including, if and when this information should be shared with parents/carers
- Ensure they are clear with regards to the establishment policy and procedures
- Formalise with the Child Protection Co-ordinator what further support the child is likely to need and how best this can be met

Responding to Disclosure/Allegations:

Whoever receives the information from the child or other person should:

- Listen carefully, let the child speak.
- Not guarantee confidentiality, whilst explaining the reasons for this.
- Not show disbelief or panic.
- Take the allegation seriously and reassure the child / person.
- Avoid expressing views on the matter.
- Explain that she / he will have to share this information with the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

Do not question the child – **this is the responsibility of agencies trained to carry out investigative interviews of children**. Questions inappropriately phrased could be thought to be suggestive and then lead to evidence being held as inadmissible in possible future criminal proceedings.

NEVER carry out an investigation or gather any photographic evidence into the allegation – **this is not your role**.

Reporting Disclosure/CP Concerns

All instances of disclosure/ CP concern should be reported to the school's Child Protection Co-ordinator **without delay** (for your school).

Staff members should not discuss these concerns with colleagues.

If the Child Protection Co-ordinator or Head Teacher / Head of Centre (for your school) is not available, seek advice from either of the other Depute Head Teachers (for your school). If they are unavailable, the Head of Service (Education & Youth Employment) (Caroline Amos- 01294 324416) or the Senior Manager (Inclusion) (Philip Gosnay) (01294 324740) should be contacted **as a matter of urgency**.

If any member of staff receives information or hears an allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct against another member of staff, the head of establishment must be informed immediately.

If establishment based staff are unavailable please refer to the Child Protection Presentation Phone Tree slide for authority contact details or the Contact Numbers slide detailing Social Services and Police phone numbers. This presentation is available on the Child Protection staff noticeboard which is located in the Staffroom, the SMT corridor and the Public drive.

CHILD PROTECTION CONTACT LIST

If you have **any concerns** about a pupil please contact **(for your school)**, Child Protection Co-ordinator. If unavailable, please see the **Head Teacher** or any of the **Pastoral Support Staff**.



Child Protection Co-ordinator
Extension Number:

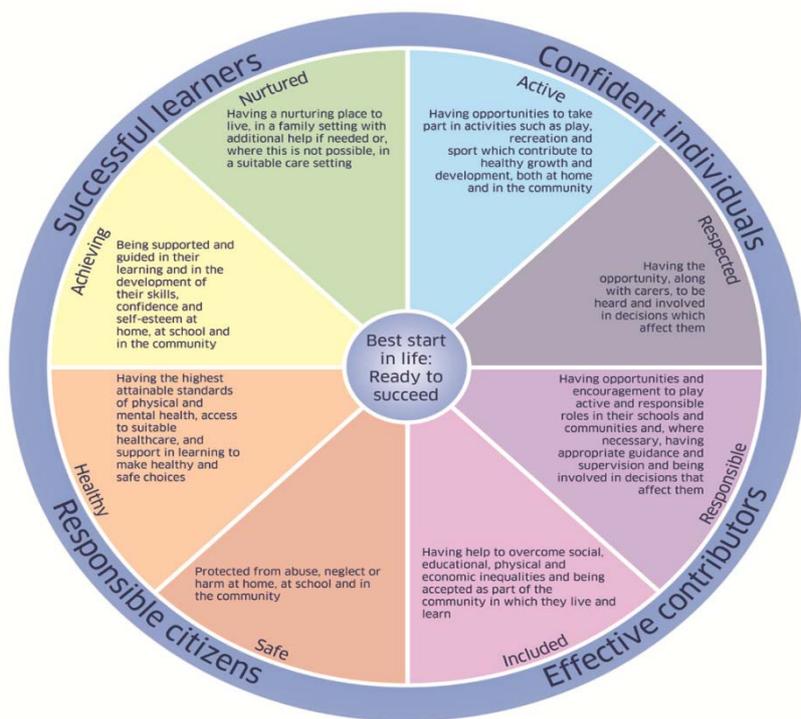
HOUSE
Named Person:
EXT no.

HOUSE
Named Person:
EXT no.

HOUSE
Named Person:
EXT no.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure all our children & young people are:

- **SAFE**
- **HEALTHY**
- **ACTIVE**
- **NURTURED**
- **ACHIEVING**
- **RESPECTED**
- **RESPONSIBLE**
- **INCLUDED**



Child Protection North Ayrshire –
www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info/cpc/

Child Protection Children and Young People–
www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info/cpc/children-and-young-people/

Child Protection Professionals –
www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info/cpc/professionals/introduction/

Appendix 3- Exemplar Information Leaflets

Appendix 3a Child and Young Person Leaflet

Children and Young People

What's counselling about?

Sometimes we all have problems that are worrying. Think of a confusing jigsaw when all the pieces are difficult to match together. Talking about a problem in counselling is like sorting out all the pieces so we can begin to build a picture that makes more sense to us.

Sometimes it's difficult to talk to parents, friends or teachers about things that are making us anxious.

A counsellor is someone who you can talk to in a different way, someone who will listen to you very carefully, who will not judge you or tell you what to do.

Counselling is about helping you to work things out for yourself, making decisions and choices and helping you to look at things differently. It can help you to feel better about yourself.

What kind of things do people talk about in counselling?

Whatever matters to them? Whatever is worrying for them? It could be about lots of different things.

Here are some examples of problems and some thoughts, questions and feelings that you may have.

For example:

PARENTS SEPARATING

Is it my fault? Their breaking up is breaking me up too.

CHAOS AT HOME

I want to go out with my mates and make my own decisions. I'm arguing with parents all the time. They never listen to me, why should I listen to them???

MAKING FRIENDS/KEEPING FRIENDS

Everyone else seems to have loads of friends. I haven't. What's wrong with me?

I'M FEELING ANGRY BUT I DON'T KNOW WHY

I'm worried because I keep feeling that I want to lash out at people. I can't control myself. I'm always in trouble at home and at school because of it.

BULLIES ARE ABOUT

I don't want to come to school. Bullies bug me every day and it's getting worse.

A TOUGH TIME AT SCHOOL

The work is piling up. I'm getting more and more behind. I can't seem to get on with it. The longer that this goes on the worse I feel.

DEATH OF SOMEONE SPECIAL

I miss this person so much. I'll never get through this. It'll be like this forever. Nobody understands how bad I'm feeling.

FEELINGS ABOUT MYSELF

Sometimes I don't understand how I feel or why I feel like I do.

How will I know if Counselling is right for me?

You can meet the counsellor for one or more sessions to find out for yourself. You can ask questions, see how you feel. The counsellor will talk to you about where and when to come and how often you will meet. Counselling is voluntary. You have the choice to come or not. Whatever you decide will be OK.

My problems and worries are private. Will other people know what I have talked about?

No. What you talk about is confidential. That means it's between you and the counsellor. It's your time and your space to be with someone who is there for you. Obviously if you want to talk to anyone else about what you have discussed in the counselling session that is up to you. The counsellor will keep confidentiality unless you are at risk of harm, the counsellor may then need to talk to someone else to help keep you safe, but will always try to talk with you about this first.

Will anything be written about me?

Keeping information about people safe and confidential is very important to the counsellor. The counsellor will make some notes about what has been talked about in the session. These are kept safely in a locked filing cabinet. All information written and discussed is private and confidential unless there is an agreed or overriding need to share this information in your best interests. A counsellor presents their work to a counselling supervisor regularly. This person checks the counsellor is working well with you. Neither your name, nor your school is mentioned.

North Ayrshire Council has been asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the counselling service it provides. Therefore, we would hope to collect information on how effective the counselling was/ is, in order to make it better. The counsellor will talk to you about this.

How do I get to see the Counsellor?

This will be amended to allow for local school arrangements, though the principles of accessibility etc. will remain.

Someone may have suggested it to you, or you can begin by talking to a member of staff that you trust. This may be your form tutor or the Pastoral teacher in the School. Your pastoral teacher can then refer you or you can obtain a self-referral form and refer yourself without discussing your worries with a teacher.

A referral form for counselling will be completed and given to your counsellor, who will see you when they have a space and discuss your wishes with you. Schools will always seek your permission and may contact your parents/carers for consent for you to attend counselling. Your opinion on this will be taken into consideration and is important. After you have finished your counselling you will be given an evaluation form to complete.

The feedback you give will let us know how well we are helping the children and young people that we see. If you have any concerns or complaints you are welcome to either speak with your counsellor or to contact the Counselling Service Manager or a member of the school staff.

Here are some comments made by pupils who have been to counselling...

“Having counselling has helped me a lot. I have been able to discuss my problems instead of locking them away, which is what I used to do. It has been a very big help to me.”

”It helped me to understand my problems and to overcome them.”

“It really helped me to talk more to my family and people around me that I could talk to.”

“The counselling has helped me to feel confident in myself.”

“I don’t feel ashamed to admit that I need help because now I know that I am not the only one that needs help.”

Appendix 3b Information leaflet Parents and Carers

What is Counselling?

The opportunity to talk about things that are of concern, to a child or young person, in confidence, with a qualified counsellor. What is spoken about will depend on the individual, but common themes are stress, relationships, change, loss and traumatic events.

What does a Counsellor do?

Counsellors are trained to listen without judging and to help people sort out their thoughts and feelings about whatever is concerning them.

Who are the Counsellors?

They are professionally qualified and experienced counsellors who have experience working with children and young people.

Why have a Counsellor in school?

A school based service brings counselling to children and young people in a place that is familiar, safe and secure. If children and young people are able to receive emotional support from a qualified professional they will have greater opportunity to fulfil their potential.

How long will counselling last?

Counselling may be for a few sessions, or longer term. It is reviewed regularly between counsellor and child or young person.

Where and when does it take place?

Usually, a small, private room is made available in your child's school during the day. Sessions last up to fifty minutes (depending on the circumstances), and appointment times can be varied so that time is not lost from any one subject.

Is it confidential?

A key feature of our service is that information discussed in the counselling session is treated confidentially. Counselling is a time when it's O.K. to talk about concerns without fear of them being discussed elsewhere. This includes not discussing the work with parents, unless the child or young person requests or gives consent for this. This can be hard for parents to accept at times, but ensuring the confidentiality of the work is crucial for establishing trust so that the children and young people feel confident to speak openly and freely about what is concerning them. However, if a pupil appears to be at risk of significant harm it may be appropriate to seek help from other agencies to keep them safe. The counsellor would aim to discuss this first with the pupil concerned.

All counsellors receive supervision of their work with young people, to ensure the quality of their practice and this is confidential.

What if I don't want my child to receive counselling?

If a child or young person requests counselling and is able to understand what is involved in the process, then they have the right to access counselling. Parents and carers may not deny them this right.

We would, however, prefer that we have your support for the work, and we are always happy to talk with you about any concerns that you may have about the idea of counselling.

What if s/he refuses to have Counselling?

The decision about whether or not to take up the offer of counselling is entirely voluntary for children and young people just as it would be for an adult.

Can I support the Counselling work?

Yes, and we welcome this. Our experience shows that the most helpful thing a parent can do is to show an acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful activity, and to show an interest if their son/daughter wishes to talk about it, but not to press them if they don't. We acknowledge that this isn't an easy task, and it is quite natural for parents to feel anxious about what may be said in the sessions.

It is always our hope that talking with a counsellor will lead to greater openness with parents and families, you will need to allow a little time for this to happen.

If my child wants to see a Counsellor does that mean I am failing as a parent?

Absolutely not! We all experience occasions when it feels hard to speak to those closest to us about things which are bothering us. Often this can be because we don't want to worry those we love best, or because we want help thinking things through with someone else outside of the family.

The Counsellor will not be judging you or your child, but looking to help them find their way through whatever is troubling them.

How are referrals made to the Counselling Service?

Referrals may be made through the school's pastoral system, or your child's head of year, the request may come from you, or your child who can self-refer.

General Data Protection Regulation Procedures and Evaluation

All information about counselling work undertaken by our staff is kept securely by the Counselling Service in line with current general data protection regulations. After the counselling has finished your child will be given an evaluation form that they can complete anonymously and return. To evaluate how the counselling is going, the project will look at other aspects too, such as attendance etc. This lets us know how well we are helping the

children and young people that we see. If there is any cause for complaint, you or your child is welcome to contact the Counsellor or the Service Manager who will aim to resolve any issues of concern.

If after reading this information, you have any more questions please contact us. If you want any further information you can ask to speak with the counsellor.

Here are some comments made by pupils who have been to counselling, which helps us understand how young people benefit

- “Having counselling has helped me a lot. I have been able to discuss my problems instead of locking them away, which is what I used to do. It has been a very big help to me.”
- “It helped me to understand my problems and to overcome them.”
- “It really helped me to talk more to my family and people around me that I could talk to.”
- “The counselling has helped me to feel confident in myself.”
- “I don’t feel ashamed to admit that I need help because now I know that I am not the only one that needs help.”

Appendix 4

Waiting for Counselling ...

When a young person is referred for counselling, they will likely be put on a waiting list and so not receive any counselling support for a while. In that interim period, it is important that the pupil continues to get support elsewhere. This guide provides some suggestions for what that support could be.

 <p>Mentors:</p> <p>Consider allocating the young person a S5/6 Mentor if they feel that would be helpful.</p>	 <p>Let the young person's parents and or class teachers know that they are having a difficult time and to look out for them (With YP'S permission or if they are at risk).</p>
 <p>Discuss with the young person if a time-out card from class would be helpful and appropriate for them.</p>	 <p>Check in with the young person – setting aside a time each week or letting them know what times you'll be around if they want to drop in.</p>
 <p>Lunchtime Counselling Drop-In:</p> <p>Remind the young person that the school counsellor has a lunchtime drop in.</p>	

Appendix 5

Referral & Inclusion criteria for counselling young people

Supporting students

Staff in schools have a key role to play in listening sympathetically to student concerns. They are first in line of an extended student support system. It is crucial to be able to identify students or situations where specialist professional help is needed, and to know how to refer the student elsewhere. We hope that the information in this presentation will help clarify when young people may need staff support, counselling support or support from external services.

Inclusion criteria

There are a range of reasons why pupils may be referred to the counselling service. They may be experiencing emotional distress which has persisted over time, or have experienced a traumatic event or crisis with recognised consequences. Some examples could be:

- Relationships
- Depression
- Panic Attacks / Anxiety
- Self Harm
- Anger / Frustration
- Body Image / Self Esteem
- Abuse
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Health Problems
- Sexuality
- Bullying
- Mental Health Issues
- Trauma
- Eating Disorders
- Bereavement
- Addiction

Identifying Issues

Pupil who are showing signs of distress do not always express problems directly or ask for help, even when there are clear signs that they are having difficulties. They may be unaware that they have a problem, or aware but feel they have to cope with it on their own, unwilling to admit it to others or they hope the problem will go away on its own.

It is important that warning signs are recognised and an appropriate, supportive response is put in place as soon as possible. Here are some indicators that may help identify pupil issues:

- Standard of work dropping dramatically
- Becoming subdued or over excited
- Sudden changes, marked mood swings and/or behaviour that appears out of character and/or extreme
- School refusal
- Those who bully others and those who experience bullying behaviour
- Are known or who are suspected to have been sexually, physically or emotionally abused
- Have difficulties due to family breakdown
- Peer group difficulties / relationships
- Have been bereaved or suffered loss or separation
- Low self esteem
- Self harm e.g. cutting
- Misuse of alcohol and drugs

Identifying Issues

Pupils who are showing signs of distress do not always express problems directly or ask for help, even when there are clear signs that they are having difficulties. They may be unaware that they have a problem, or aware but feel they have to cope with it on their own, unwilling to admit it to others or they hope the problem will go away on its own.

It is important that warning signs are recognised and an appropriate, supportive response is put in place as soon as possible. Here are some indicators that may help identify pupil issues:

- Standard of work dropping dramatically
- Becoming subdued or over excited
- Sudden changes, marked mood swings and/or behaviour that appears out of character and/or extreme
- School refusal
- Those who bully others and those who experience bullying behaviour
- Are known or who are suspected to have been sexually, physically or emotionally abused
- Have difficulties due to family breakdown
- Peer group difficulties / relationships
- Have been bereaved or suffered loss or separation
- Low self esteem
- Self harm e.g. cutting
- Misuse of alcohol and drugs

Initiating Dialogue

Think about it in advance and approach the student in a sympathetic and understanding way. Remember to be sensitive to issues relating to sexuality, race, religion, culture, and gender or any physical or sensory impairment or condition that they might have.

Listen to the pupil – the situation may only require empathetic listening. You can simply ask the pupil how they are as this may provide them with an opportunity to discuss their concerns with you. Sometimes emotional support is all that is required. Giving prompt and appropriate support can help build a relationship of trust between staff and the student and prevent an escalation into a more serious issue.

A pupil may approach you or vice versa to discuss their concerns and you may be able to offer some friendly guidance on an issue such as homesickness, feelings of insecurity or the break-up of a relationship. The offer of an invitation to come back to talk if they want to may be all that is needed.

When the student does not want to talk or refuses support

It can be extremely difficult to help a pupil with an issue they may have if they are not ready to acknowledge this. If the student is not ready to accept help or talk about their issue it is unwise to ask intrusive questions and the pupil's right not to discuss things must be respected.

Offer an open invitation to the student to come back and talk to you and continue to ask how they are.

Discussing Counselling with a Pupil

If a pupil issue has been identified, staff can suggest counselling to the pupil to help them cope with their situation. Staff should be considerate when doing this as pupils may not want their peer

group to know that they are having difficulties, therefore this should be done discreetly. If the pupil is willing to attend counselling, then either the staff member or the pupil can submit a referral form, depending on what the pupil is more comfortable with.

- The idea of counselling should be talked about sensitively with the pupil. This helps them to understand what is involved and that this is a normal and ordinary approach to supporting children and young people with difficulties.
- The care that is taken with this can make a big difference to whether or not they attend the first appointment, or how they approach it.
- It is essential that counselling sessions are seen as voluntary and confidential and it is a means of support and not a disciplinary measure for a pupil.
- It should be made clear that it is an opportunity to talk about problems and worries with a view to resolving or managing them more easily.
- The first session is an opportunity for counsellor and pupil to make a decision as to whether to engage in counselling or not.

Checklist – Prior to Referring

- Does the pupil want to participate in counselling to work towards a change?
- Does the pupil meet the inclusion criteria?
- Has the pupil been fully consulted about his/her referral?
- Does the pupil agree with the reason behind the referral?
- Has the counselling service been explained to the pupil?
- Is the pupil willing to meet the counsellor for an initial appointment?
- Do I trust that counselling may or may not benefit this pupil?
- Do you feel that this pupil needs more than a listening ear and support of staff?
- Have you consulted with other supportive options which may be of benefit? e.g. pastoral/guidance, school nurse, pupil support, other support offered by school etc. (this information should be supplied when submitting referral form)

Answering YES to all these questions indicates that your referral is appropriate for counselling.

When Counselling may not be needed

While a child's behaviour may be unsettling, the young person themselves may not agree with this and so this would not be appropriate to expect a counsellor to address a 'problem' that the young person does not see. In this example, it would be the staff's responsibility to develop appropriate interventions or take a restorative approach as needed.

It is important to explore the reasons for particular pupil behaviour. A distressed pupil may only need time to adapt to a change in their situation, or they may need help in making that adaptation.

Sometimes providing a calm and trusting environment for reflection can help pupils see a way forward without the need for referral; sometimes pupils may need to simply 'vent' or to know that someone cares.

Pupils with Significant Distress

Submitting a referral for counselling may not be received straightaway by the counsellor as there may be a waiting list to attend counselling. Therefore if the referral is for someone of high risk then the person referring must also take immediate action to ensure the safety of the young person.

While a young person may be engaging in high-risk behaviours or having thoughts of suicide, it may be that there are already sufficient protective factors in place, such as: positive family relations, CAMHS etc. that reduce the risk for that person. Therefore, while a counselling referral may still be appropriate, these protective factors should be acknowledged.

All counsellors in North Ayrshire Secondary Schools are or will be trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). “ other staff per secondary school will be trained to support a team approach to managing risk around suicidal ideation and suicide.

The Referral Form

Any member of staff, parents, or outside agencies can refer a pupil for counselling, if the pupil is willing to participate in counselling. Pupils can also refer themselves for counselling directly, without speaking to staff by filling out a self-referral form.

There are questions related to the student's feelings on the reverse of the referral forms, which should be completed by the student in private, prior to the referral being submitted. If the referral is completed by a member of staff or other, then they should allow the student to complete the questionnaire on the reverse in private.

It is important that the pupil's candidate number is included when completing the referral form.

Whoever completes the referral form can indicate to the counsellor how soon they feel the pupil should be seen, by ticking either 'see as soon as possible' or 'see at next available opportunity.' What is chosen here will be taken into consideration by the counsellor as well as the pupil's outcome of questionnaire on reverse of the referral form.

Understanding Urgent Referral

It is important to understand first the difference between an urgent referral and an urgent risk.

Urgent referral is when the counsellor would see the young person at their earliest opportunity as a preventative measure.

Urgent risk is when immediate attention to the young person is required by staff to assess risk and put in place any safety measures required or contact the appropriate person to do so.

In this case attending counselling may or may not be appropriate and the counsellor would form part of an agreed team approach to determine if a counselling assessment was appropriate

How soon the pupil will see the counsellor

Counsellors working to capacity would have a list of pupils waiting to attend counselling which would determine how quickly pupils would receive an assessment appointment. This could be a few days or a few months depending on the number of pupils on the waiting list. The person referring and the pupil should be aware of this prior to submitting the referral.

The counsellor will consider any concerns raised by staff regarding the pupil and would then consider the pupil's priority in the waiting list.

Reasons counselling may not benefit the pupil

It can be difficult for pupils to come into counselling and take responsibility for their mental health and well-being. **Not every young person who adults may identify in need of support will be ready or willing to engage in counselling. Consideration should be given of what other approaches may be more appropriate. For example, would more immediate needs for safety security and**

trust be better met through a nurture/ key adult approach, checking in with the young person regularly.

It also takes courage for them to address their concerns/issues honestly while wrestling with fear of judgment and rejection. Fundamentally this is a fear of pain and like everyone else, we are hard-wired to resist pain, so why should counselling be any different?

Pupils should be ready to be honest about their feelings and genuinely want change, to benefit from counselling. Active participation from the pupil in counselling can help them gain self-awareness and develop a sense of who they are.

Counsellors can help with that process but they cannot force it. Pupils are the only ones who can chose to make changes for themselves.

Counselling is person-centred and person-led.

The pupil may choose to work on concerns unrelated to the original referral and there be working towards a different outcome than anticipated by the person(s) that was involved in referring to counselling.

Many things can come from exploration in counselling and staff should be mindful that their expectations of what students should acieve and what students may actually achieve could be very different. It is also important to note that some changes and progress that students experience in counselling may not be visible to staff members.

Referral Checklist

- The pupil meets the inclusion criteria for referral
- Pupil wants to participate in counselling to work towards change
- All other supportive options available have been explored
- The CORE questions have been completed by the pupil
- Pupil's candidate number is supplied on referral form

Appendix 6

North Ayrshire Council Secondary Counselling Service policies, forms and guidance list*

Policies and procedures:

North Ayrshire Guidelines for the Delivery of Secondary Counselling (includes Guidelines for Child Protection / Safeguarding)

Forms for the counselling service:

1. Pastoral Referral with CORE
2. Pupil Self-Referral with CORE
3. Confidentiality statement (undergoing revision)
4. Assessment Form
5. CORE YP (every three sessions)
6. SDQ, 11-17 year olds (Pre)
7. SDQ, 11-17 year olds (Post)
8. Attendance Record
9. Session Notes form
10. Post Evaluation
11. Front cover for submitting research
12. Drop In log
13. Returner's Form
14. Capacity Assessment
15. Behaviour Assessment
16. **Suicide Assessment (in process)**
17. Safety Plan (from www.getselfhelp.co.uk by Carol Vivyan, 2011)
18. Appointment slips

Other general forms:

1. Mileage and expenses form
2. Monthly/4 weekly (Local government staff) Travelling and Other Expenses of Officers
3. Flexible working spreadsheet
4. CPD spreadsheet

Other relevant documents:

- Ayrshire multi-agency guidance for people working with children and young people at risk of self-harm or suicide, September 2013, North Ayrshire Council and partner agencies (due to be revised)

*please note: the form list is included here for your information, please see separate document / binder with all the forms

Appendix 7 References

Bond, T., Mitchels, B. (2015) *Confidentiality and record keeping in counselling and psychotherapy*, 2nd edition. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions, BACP, 2018

Good Practice Guidance for counselling in schools' 4th edition, BACP, 2006

Good Practice in Action 014, Confidentiality, BACP,

Good Practice in Action 026, Legal Resources for the counselling professions, Counselling Children and Young People in School Contexts in Scotland, BACP

Good Practice in Action 046, Working with children and young people in the counselling professions, BACP

Good Practice in Action 065, Confidentiality and Record Keeping within the Counselling Professions, BACP

Good Practice in Action 066, What do we mean by records and record keeping, BACP

Good Practice in Action 067, Practical Aspects of Record keeping within the counselling professions, BACP

Good Practice in Action 068, Record keeping within organisational settings in the counselling professions, BACP

Guidelines for the Provision of Counselling In Schools, Hertfordshire County Council, 2007

School Based Counselling Operating Toolkit, BACP and Welsh Assembly Government, 2016:
<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/110823toolkitmarch11bi.pdf>

Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future, departmental advice for school leaders and counsellors, UK Department for Education, 2016:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497825/Counselling_in_schools.pdf



Pastoral Referral Form – Secondary Counselling

Pupil's Name:		
School:		
Candidate Number:		Date:
Date of Birth:	Gender:	School Year:
Pastoral Teacher:		Referred by PT? Yes / No
If no, please specify:		
Is this pupil willing to participate in counselling? Yes / No		

What is your cause for concern?

Is this young person formally looked after? Yes / No / Don't know

If so, is this: at home away from home
 in foster care other (please specify: _____)

Do you consider this young person to be a potential risk to themselves or the counsellor? Yes / No / Don't know

If yes, please explain:

Are you aware of any other professional involvement with this student?

What help/support from family and peers does this student have?

How soon does the student want to see the counsellor?

As soon as possible At the next available opportunity

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain or the item seems daft! Please give your answers on the basis of the child's behaviour over the last six months or this school year.

Child's Name

Male/Female

Date of Birth.....

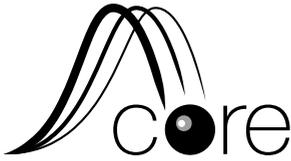
	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
Considerate of other people's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often complains of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shares readily with other children (treats, toys, pencils etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rather solitary, tends to play alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally obedient, usually does what adults request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many worries, often seems worried	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constantly fidgeting or squirming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has at least one good friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often fights with other children or bullies them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally liked by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easily distracted, concentration wanders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nervous or clingy in new situations, easily loses confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind to younger children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often lies or cheats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picked on or bullied by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often volunteers to help others (parents, teachers, other children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thinks things out before acting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steals from home, school or elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gets on better with adults than with other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many fears, easily scared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sees tasks through to the end, good attention span	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature

Date

Parent/Teacher/Other (please specify:)

Thank you very much for your help



CORE-YP

School: _____	Male <input type="checkbox"/>
Name: _____	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate Number: _____	
Date of Birth: _____	
Date: _____	
Is this the first CORE-YP you are filling out?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If no, what session are you on? ____	

These questions are about how you have been feeling OVER THE LAST WEEK. Please read each question carefully. Think how often you have felt like that in the last week and then put a cross in the box you think fits best. Please use a dark pen (not pencil) and mark clearly within the boxes.

OVER THE LAST WEEK...

	Not at all	Only occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Most of all of the time
1. I've felt edgy or nervous	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
2. I haven't felt like talking to anyone	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
3. I've felt able to cope when things go wrong	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
4. I've thought of hurting myself	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
5. There's been someone I felt able to ask for help	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
6. My thoughts and feelings distressed me	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
7. My problems have felt too much for me	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
8. It's been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
9. I've felt unhappy	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
10. I've done all the things I wanted to	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0

Thank you for answering these questions